

**Western & Atlantic Railroad Culvert
(Noonday Creek Culvert)
Stilesboro Road
Marietta
Cobb County
Georgia**

HAER No. GA-90

HAER
GA
34-MARI,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Western & Atlantic Railroad Culvert (Noonday Creek Culvert)

HAER No. GA-90

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Location: North side of Stilesboro Road, 3,440 feet (0.65 miles) 4 -
east of the intersection of Stilesboro Road and New
Salem Road, approximately 3 miles northwest of
Marietta, Cobb County, Georgia.

USGS 7.5' Quadrangle: Marietta, Georgia
UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, E721500, N3762500

Present Owner: State of Georgia
State Properties Commission
200 Piedmont Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia

Present Use: Railroad culvert; to be altered by the construction of
Barrett Parkway.

Date of Construction: ca. 1848

Engineer: William L. Mitchell

Builder: Henry Thompson

Significance: The Western & Atlantic Railroad Culvert over
Noonday Creek is the oldest remaining culvert from
the construction of the rail line in 1854. The culvert is
associated with the growth and expansion of rail
transportation in the United States and the American
Civil War. The culvert also reflects the distinctive
characteristics of a type and method of construction,
the mid-nineteenth century railroad construction.

Part I. Physical Description

The Western & Atlantic Railroad Culvert (Noonday Creek Culvert) spans Noonday Creek 0.65 miles northeast of the intersection of Stilesboro Road and New Salem Church Road. Situated in the floodplain of Noonday Creek, the terrain rises steeply east and west of the culvert. The culvert is constructed entirely from cut and dressed fieldstone. The stone arch measures approximately 11.7 feet in width and 9.1 feet in height. Construction of the culvert enabled the Western & Atlantic Railroad to cross Noonday Creek without hindering the normal drainage patterns. Construction of Barrett Parkway will alter the appearance of the Western & Atlantic Railroad Culvert by removing the wing walls and installing a lining that will obscure the stonework.

Part II. Historical Context

The Western & Atlantic Railroad between Atlanta and Chattanooga represents a significant chapter in the history of transportation and internal improvements in the United States. It was commissioned and financed by the State of Georgia to connect the rapidly expanding Midwest region of the United States and the Georgia port of Savannah, as well as to establish a central transportation hub for the Georgia interior that would serve lines connecting throughout the Southeast. The 1830s witnessed a surge of interest in internal improvements in general and railroads in particular. The opening of the South Carolina Railroad from Charleston to Hamburg, South Carolina, across the Savannah River from Augusta, ignited a spirit of interstate competition and civic pride that resulted in the completion of over 1,400 miles of rails in Georgia by 1861, making its system second only to Virginia's on the eve of the Civil War.

The legislative act creating the Western & Atlantic Railroad was passed in December 1836, and within a year a complete survey had been completed by Col. Stephen Long, who had served with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The exact date on which construction began is not known, but in April 1838 bids were accepted at Marietta for construction of the masonry and grading, and some excavation and embankment had apparently begun before then (Johnston 1932:20-21).

On December 4, 1841, the legislature determined to suspend work on the road due to a lack of funding, and little was accomplished over the next several years. In 1845, however, the first section, from Marietta to Atlanta—still officially named Marthasville—was completed. Although the project received some criticism, it proceeded steadily northward from Marietta from 1845 to 1847, and each new section was opened to service as quickly as possible (Johnston 1932:29). The section of the line that crosses Noonday Creek was operational no later than October 1845, when service was opened to Cartersville (Garnett 1846:1).

Noonday Creek was first crossed by a bridge, which was used until 1848, when a contract was made to fill the ravine and, apparently, install a culvert. In his annual report to the governor in October 1848, Chief Engineer Mitchell noted:

I have put under contract upon satisfactory terms, the embankment of the ravines at Noon-day and Proctor's creeks in lieu of rebuilding bridges there; and I propose to press this policy in reference to all our present bridges as far as practicable, with all the urgency the funds of the Road will warrant having due regard to economy as to the time of substituting banks for bridges. . . . The expense of embanking Noon-day and Proctor, are to be paid out of the profits of the road. [Mitchell 1848a:2]

In a letter dated October 21, 1848, Mitchell indicated that the contract for the work was made with Henry Thompson, who was authorized to secure iron bars from a company in Cass County in exchange for credit with the railroad (Mitchell 1848b). Existing records of the treasurer and auditor of the railroad from 1848 and 1849 were examined for information related to the construction of this culvert, but no reference to that specific project was found, nor was any disbursement made to Henry Thompson. A certain Henry Thompson, 25 years of age, is recorded as a mechanic in the 1850 census of Walker County, near Chattanooga, but whether this is the same man is unknown.

According to the inventory descriptions at the Georgia Department of Archives and History, a special report was made to the governor concerning the condition of the railroad after its return to the state from the federal authorities in 1865, after the Civil War; however, this report could not be located. The first annual report of the superintendent of the railroad after the Civil War was made in 1866. The section of that report entitled "Bridges and Culverts" makes no mention of the culvert over Noonday Creek. The superintendent's report of 1868 notes that 258 culverts were located along the line, but only 15 were of the stone arch type. The report also states the culverts "with some exceptions, perform their office satisfactorily. Most of them were put in when the road was constructed." He notes, however, that "much of the masonry of these culverts . . . is in a dilapidated condition, and in some instances require extensive repairs." He concludes that over 30 culverts are in need of "general overhauling." Specifically, culverts over Allatoona and Pettit's Creeks were shoddily constructed, and the one at Allatoona had collapsed. A suit was brought against the contractor, H. G. Cole, who sublet the work at considerable profit. Several workers testified that interior work was hidden from the engineer in charge during his inspections.

The culvert at Noonday Creek was apparently better constructed. When the line was inventoried in 1917, the six-foot stone arch was reported to be in good condition; it was also noted that many old culverts were being replaced by box culverts of masonry construction. Photographs of the old and new types were included, with a stone arch type given as an example of the old type. Seventeen stone arch culverts are listed in the inventory (Johnston and Cohen 1917). Subsequent annual reports of "betterments" to the line do not indicate any major work on the Noonday Creek culvert through the 1940s. In 1936, "Armco Mult. Plate Lining" was installed on three stone arch culverts (Annual Report of Betterments

1936). This lining would presumably obscure the original stonework and compromise the historical integrity of the structure. Other improvements to culverts are recorded in these annual reports, but how many were stone arch structures is unknown.

Also unknown is how many of the original stone arch culverts remain along the Western & Atlantic Railroad line. David Runton, a project engineer with CSX, had seen other stone arch culverts on the line but was uncertain where, except for one at Vinings that has been covered and extended on one end, similar to what has been proposed for Barrett Parkway Site 7. He thought that a figure of 15-18, based on the available reports from the surveys in 1870 and 1917, was probably accurate (David Runton, personal communication 1993). Without a formal survey of the entire line, it seems reasonable to assume that less than 20 culverts of this type were ever built and that at least some have been replaced or altered. Given the age, condition, and the uniqueness of the stone arch culvert at Noonday Creek, it is considered a significant cultural resource eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Part III. Sources

Annual Report of Betterments

- 1936 Supplementary Report to Condition Report and Inventory of the Western & Atlantic Railroad, by J. Houston Johnston and J. Groves Cohen. On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group 85.1, Series 1.

Garnett, C. F. M.

- 1846 Report of the Chief Engineer of the Western & Atlantic Railroad. On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group 18.2, Series 72.

Johnston, J. Houston

- 1932 The Western & Atlantic of the State of Georgia. In *Pursuance of Legislative Action*, 1925. Georgia Public Service Commission, Atlanta.

Johnston, J. Houston, and J. Groves Cohen

- 1917 Condition Report and Inventory of the Western & Atlantic Railroad, Submitted to the Western & Atlantic Railroad Commission by Its Engineer and Secretary. On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group 85.1, Series 1.

Mitchell, William L.

- 1848a Annual Report to the Governor of Georgia of the Chief Engineer of the Western & Atlantic Railroad. On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group 18.2, Series 72.

1848b Letter to Mssrs. Cooper, Stoup, and Wiley, Iron Works, Cass County.
Outgoing Correspondence of the Chief Engineer, Western & Atlantic Railroad.
On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group
18.2, Series 72.

Superintendent of the Western & Atlantic Railroad

1866 Annual Report of the Officers of the Western & Atlantic Railroad to His
Excellency Chas. J. Jenkins, Governor, for the Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 10, 1866.
On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Record Group
18.2, Series 72.

1868 Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Western & Atlantic Railroad
to the Governor. On file, Georgia Department of Archives and History,
Atlanta, Record Group 18.2, Series 72.

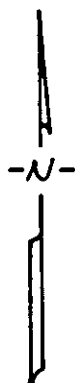
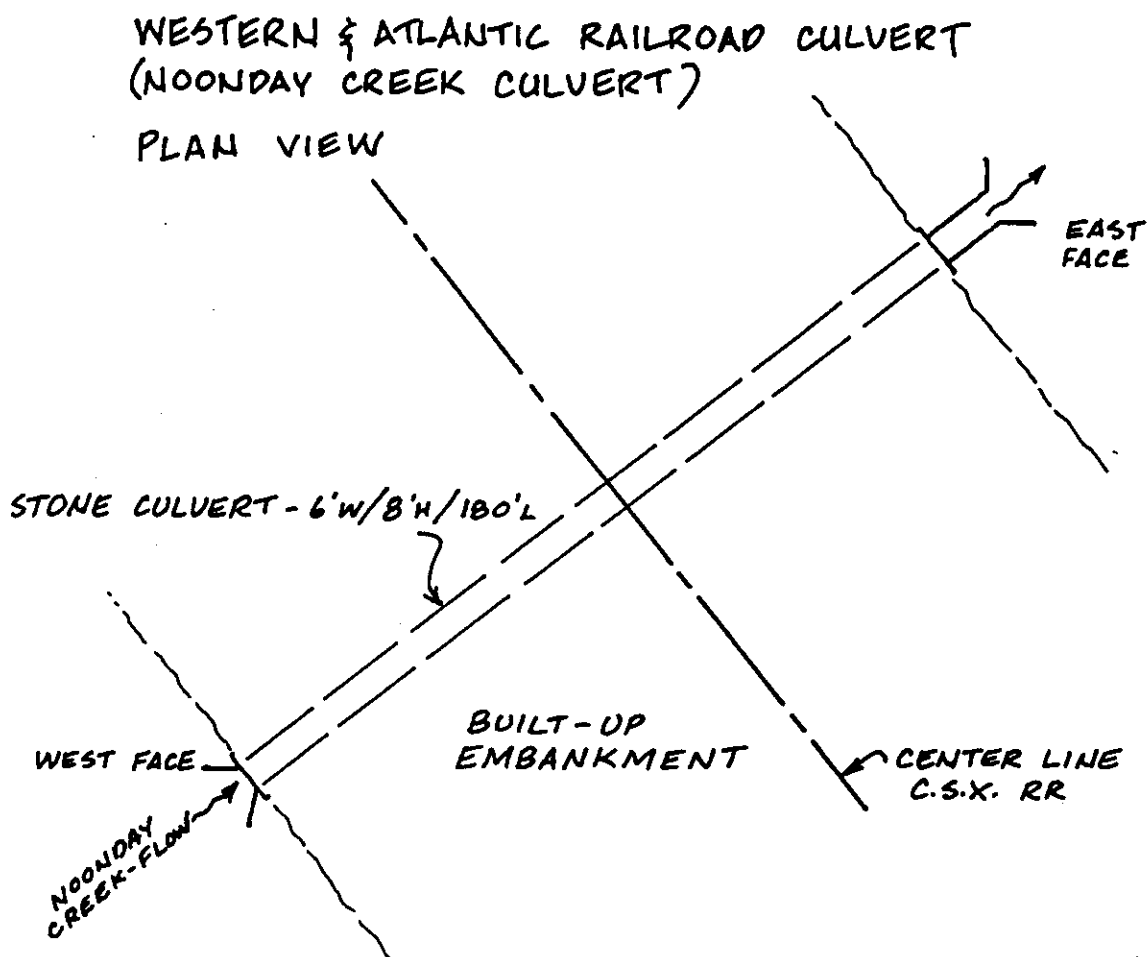
U.S. Bureau of the Census

1850 Manuscript Returns of the Seventh Census of the United States,
Population Schedule, Walker County, Georgia. Microfilm on file, Georgia
Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

Part IV. Organization

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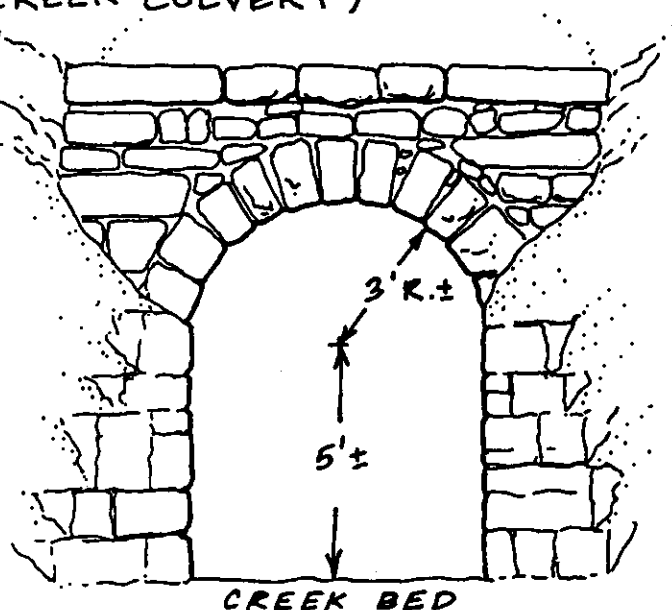
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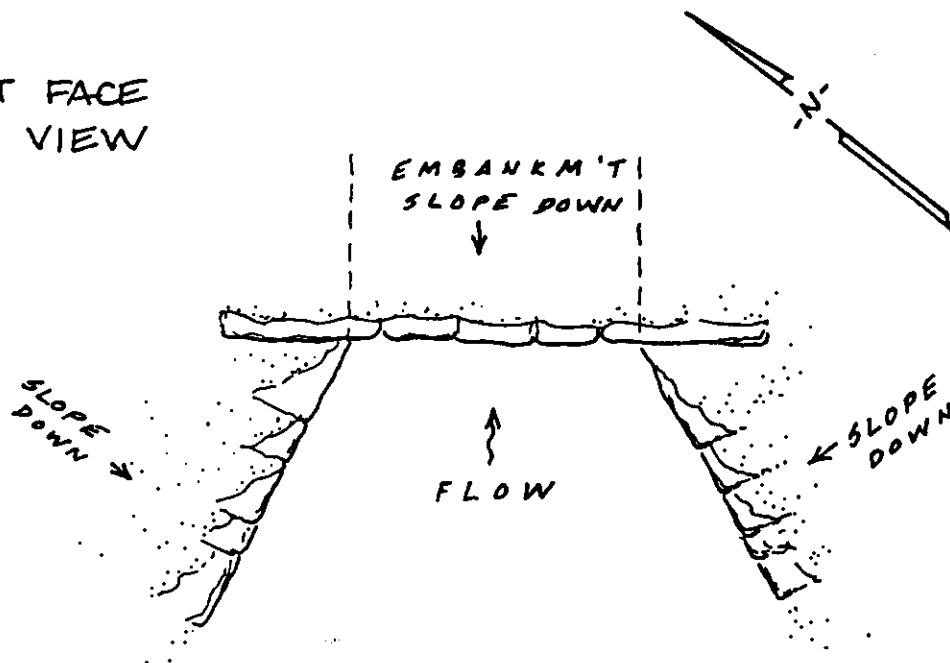
WESTERN & ATLANTIC RAILROAD CULVERT
(NOONDAY CREEK CULVERT)

WEST FACE
ELEVATION



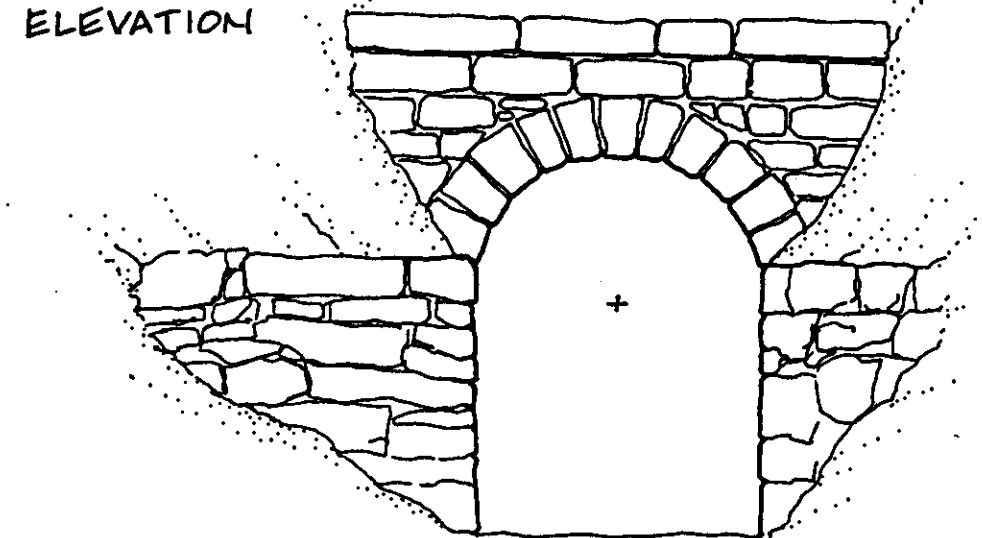
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WEST FACE
PLAN VIEW



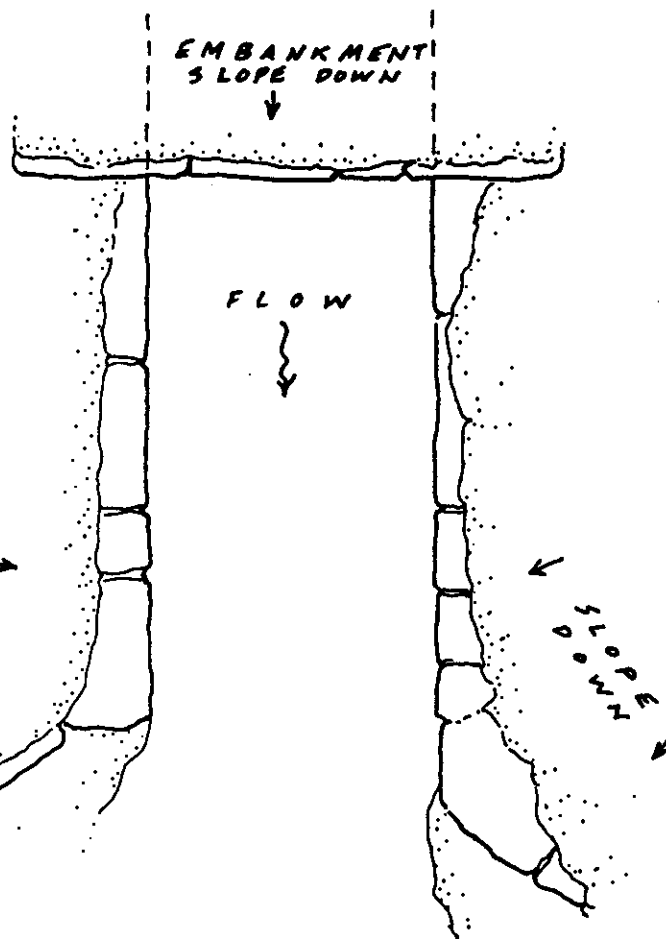
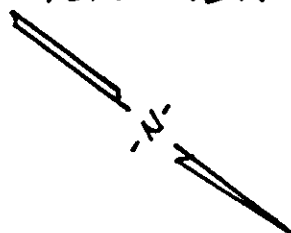
WESTERN & ATLANTIC RAILROAD CULVERT
(NOONDAY CREEK CULVERT)

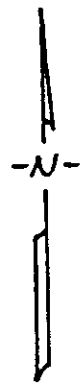
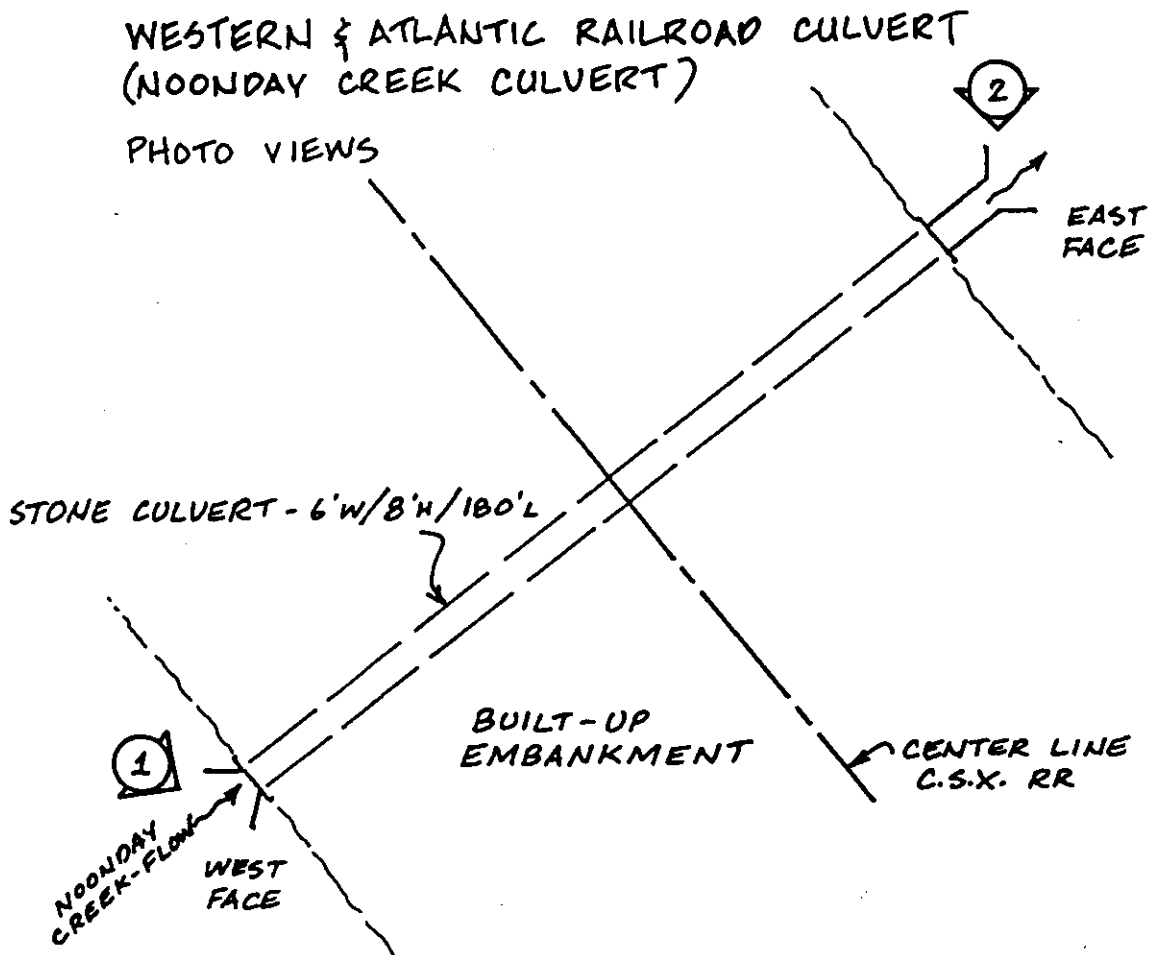
EAST FACE
ELEVATION



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EAST FACE
PLAN VIEW





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